

ALA IS NEEDED FOR GOOD HEALTH

Flax is one of the richest sources of Alpha-linolenic acid (ALA) in the diet. ALA is the parent compound of the omega-3 fatty acid family. It must be obtained because our bodies do not make it. In this regard, ALA is an essential nutrient just like vitamin C and calcium. ALA has important biologic effects and helps prevent and manage chronic diseases like heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, kidney disease and certain types of cancer.

ALA dampens inflammation, which is a feature of many chronic diseases, and it helps promote the proper functioning of blood vessels, which reduces the risk of heart attacks and stroke.

ALA constitutes 75-80% of total omega-3 fatty acids in breast milk, underscoring its importance for infant growth and development. ALA is also required for maintaining the nervous system. A deficiency of ALA in humans causes poor growth, numbness, pain in the legs, difficulty walking and blurred vision. These deficiency symptoms can be alleviated by adding ALA to the diet.



Source: Flax Council of Canada, 2007

RECIPE

Lemon-Banana Cake with Flaxseeds

- 1/4 cup softened butter or olive oil
- 2/3 cup sugar
- 1 egg
- 2 very ripe, medium-sized bananas, mashed
- 1 teaspoon lemon zest or 1 tbsp of lemon juice
- 2 teaspoons lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 3/4 cup flour
- 1/4 cup ground flaxseed (grind, then measure)
- 1/2 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/4 teaspoon salt

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. In a large bowl, mix butter and sugar until creamy. Add egg, mixing well. Add banana, zest, juice and vanilla. In a small bowl, combine flour, ground flaxseed, baking powder, soda and salt. Combine half the flour mixture with butter mixture. Add remaining flour mixture. Do NOT over mix. Spray an 8x8-inch baking pan with cooking spray. Spoon into greased and floured pan. Smooth the top. Bake for 25 minutes or until toothpick comes clean. Cool and dust with powdered sugar. Serves 12.

Serving size: a slice (1/12 of cake)

Calories: 148

Fat 5g; Saturated fat: 3g; Cholesterol: 28g;

Fiber: 1g

Protein 2g

Source: Flax Council of Canada, 2007

THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA.



FLAXSEED



- BENEFITS
- WAYS TO USE
- PLACES TO FIND

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WHAT IS FLAXSEED?

Flaxseeds, glossy brown seeds, are native to the region extending from eastern Mediterranean to India. In the 17th century, flax was first introduced and planted in Canada, the country that is currently the major producer of this extremely beneficial seed. Flaxseeds maybe small, but its health benefits are big!



Flaxseed plant



Flaxseeds

Flaxseed is a great source of the omega-3 fatty acid, alpha-linolenic acid (ALA), and fiber. Diets containing omega-3 fatty acid may help lower cholesterol, reduce inflammation and lower the risk of certain cancers.

FLAXSEED IN THE CLINIC

Nutritional properties of flaxseeds vary depending upon how the seeds are consumed. Whole seeds provide fiber but the body cannot break down whole seeds to access the omega-3 – containing oil. Ground seeds will provide the benefits of both omega-3s and fiber. Flaxseed oil provides omega-3 benefits but not fiber since the seed is not consumed.

Source: Flax Council of Canada, 2007

FLAXSEED IN THE KITCHEN

Flaxseed contributes a nutty flavor and richness to a variety of foods. Slightly larger than sesame seeds and ranging from dark reddish brown to a deep gold, whole flaxseeds make a crunchy garnish. If allowed to sprout, flaxseeds add a spicy bite to salads. Store them in an air-tight container in a dark, dry and cool place where they will keep fresh for several months.

Flaxseed oil may be used in salad dressings and smoothies or added to cooked products off the heat, but do not sauté with flaxseed oil; it has a low smoke point and quickly breaks down. Flaxseed oil is especially perishable and should be purchased in opaque bottles that have been kept refrigerated.

For milled flaxseed, grind whole seeds to a smooth consistency in a coffee grinder or food processor, or purchase pre-ground seeds sold as “flaxseed meal.” Use milled flaxseed to subtly enhance the flavor of oatmeal, yogurt or applesauce.

FLAXSEED FACTS:

One Tablespoon of Whole Flaxseed =
1.2 g soluble fiber + 2.4 g insoluble fiber

One Tablespoon of Ground Flaxseed =
0.9 g soluble fiber + 1.8 g insoluble fiber
and 1.8g of ALA

One Tablespoon of Flaxseed Oil = 2.8g ALA
and no fiber

Source: Flax Council of Canada, 2007

FLAXSEED IN USE

- Sprinkle ground flaxseeds onto your hot or cold cereal, salads, or raw vegetables
- Add flaxseeds to your homemade muffin, cookie or bread recipe
- To pump up the nutritional volume of your breakfast shake, add ground flaxseeds.
- To give cooked vegetables a nuttier flavor, sprinkle some ground flaxseeds on top of them
- Add a tablespoon of flaxseed oil to smoothies
- Use flaxseed as a coating ingredient for chicken, fish and other protein items

WHERE TO BUY*

Whole Foods Market: \$4.99 15oz (whole)
\$6.99 16oz (ground)

Sunflower Farmers Market:
\$2.49 16oz (brown whole)
\$3.99 16oz (golden whole)

Trader Joe's \$2.99 16oz (whole)
\$2.49 16oz (ground)
\$7.99 16 oz (oil)

* prices as of 10/09.

